



CHAMBERS OF THE SOUL



• Cornelius Woelfkin •





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Chambers of the Soul

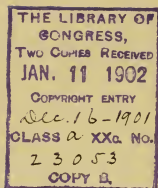
By
Rev. Cornelius Woelskin.



United Society of Christian Endeavor
Boston and Chicago

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Preface.

THE following addresses were delivered at the Quiet Hour services in the Cincinnati Convention of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. They were designed to be plain and simple index-fingers, suggesting what might prove a profitable line of meditation. To me those morning hours were seasons of refreshing. If these addresses were made a blessing to any soul, the praise thereof belongs to God. If in their printed form they shall be further owned of the Holy Spirit in helping the lives of any of my fellow laborers, the glory shall still be unto Him from whom cometh all good. My prayer for all my young friends is that their whole spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord.

CORNELIUS WOELFKIN.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Q.S.G.
Recd
Jan 14 '02
R.F.K. 22 Je '33.



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A PARABLE.

A PARABLE.

A CERTAIN nobleman named Thelema received from his emperor the gift of a kingdom. Within the boundaries of his province his authority was that of an absolute monarch over all his subjects. Associated with him were noblemen renowned for wisdom and ability, who were to constitute the cabinet in the king's court. Among these there was first a learned *judge*, with a reputation for integrity, honor, judgment, and counsel sufficient to guide the king amid serious and perplexing difficulties, and save him the embarrassment of shame, reproach, or loss. Besides the judge there was an *artist* and architect, whose skill was to spend itself in designing and decorating the king's palace and capitol. The other men of affairs who were to counsel and serve the king were a *scholar* of great attainments, whose wisdom was to direct the educational affairs of the realm and enrich the empire with stores of knowledge; *merchants*, who carried on commerce with the outer world, sending

their ships upon every sea, and awaiting the return of each argosy with its treasure; *musicians*, who were gathered into orchestras and choirs, to awaken symphonies and oratorios of peace, and make every quarter of the kingdom echo with melody and music; and, lastly, a master of rolls, whose office was that of *librarian* and historian, and to whose care the archives of the realm were sacredly committed. There was not lacking to King Thelema aught that would help him in establishing his kingdom with wisdom, righteousness, peace, power, and glory.

Had King Thelema remained loyal to his lord, and made the glory of his sovereign the motive of his reign, the annals of his dynasty would have made a different history in human experience. But in an evil hour he was tempted by vainglory and selfish ambition; and, yielding to subtle seduction, he rebelled against authority, and threw off all subjection to his sovereign. In lawlessness he sought to found his kingdom in independence with self-love and self-glory as the motive and end of all activities.

It promised well. But with the king's

rebellion the spirit of lawlessness became contagious, infecting all the court. Only the judge aspired to remain loyal and true; but his attitude was ridiculed, his judgment discredited, his argument silenced. For his reiterated protest against anarchy and his pleadings for submission he was wounded, persecuted, and imprisoned. The artist lent himself to the caprice of the wayward king. Soon he departed from ideals of purity and truth, and filled the galleries with designs that could only bring shame and reproach. The scholar broke away from true wisdom, and sought out many devices and inventions of iniquity. His noble gifts became prostituted in the interests of vice and sin. The musicians became intoxicated with licentiousness. They lost the concert pitch, and, every man playing his own tune, in his own time, on his own key, soon destroyed all harmony and filled the place with wild discord. Merchantmen became pirates upon the high seas, and gathered booty of contraband riches. The master of rolls, made the recorder of foul doings, was compelled to receive stolen riches, and soon became the custodian of much iniquity, and the treasurer of lewd

and unholy things. Everywhere the evidences of revolt and sedition betokened the swift decay and ruin of the kingdom.

For a season this licentious freedom was exhilarating with its own novelty. But soon confusion wrought division and faction. The king exercised his authority with a capricious spirit, and became the tool of selfish intrigue. Subjects suspected the king and one another, until every man's hand was against his brother, and dread and despair were undermining contentment and happiness.

Meantime, tidings came from the great capitol that the sovereign was making inquisition into this revolution. Couriers came with propositions of peace on condition of submission and return to loyalty. Others followed, messengers of warnings and threats for continued revolt. Moved with fear and the deep sense of loss, the subjects desired to yield; and sometimes one, occasionally all, would urge upon the king to submit. The scholar said it was wise, and the judge affirmed it as right. In their best moments the artist longed to be rid of the contamination of false ideals, and the musicians desired reorganization.

Merchantmen wished for pardon, while the master of rolls became anxiously weary of the burden of responsibility, having in his possession so much the discovery of which could only overwhelm him with confusion. Yet the king held out in stubborn resistance, threatening to bring destruction upon all the realm, for he alone held the key to the unfortunate situation.

Finally, in a better mood, under the pressure of conviction, the urgency of right, the constraint of a longing, and the fear of penalty, King Thelema decided to humble himself, and surrender his violated trust. Kneeling before his sovereign, he abdicated his throne, laid aside the royal purple, placed his crown and sceptre at the feet of the emperor, and for himself and his subjects submitted himself to the will of his lord. And now his sovereign, moved with compassion and grace, visits neither banishment nor punishment upon him, but, being reconciled, he raises him up, clothes him again with the apparel of royalty, and reinvests him with all forfeited authority and power. Thus the king with all his court obtains their souls' desire—a new beginning.

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But the consequences of the rebellion cannot be abolished in a day. The judge, having been wounded and clamored into silence, is not quite so sensitive and positive concerning right and wrong. The artist finds a taint of evil among his fairest ideals. The scholar finds his perceptive faculties have become dull. The musicians find it difficult to maintain the concert pitch and avoid all discord. The merchants cannot check all piracy in a moment, while the master of rolls is continually stumbling upon some possession that should never have come under his care, and which he finds it difficult or impossible to banish. This weakness necessarily impairs the glory and power of the king, and within his own soul the rebellious spirit is not wholly dead. He cannot arbitrarily control what his voluntary sedition impaired.

In this crisis the emperor himself graciously deigns to visit the kingdom and abide there for its reconstruction. No single subject is destroyed, banished, displaced, or substituted. Every one is secured in his distinctive position, and helped in the performance of his unique duty. The king's cabinet have their dwelling-place

in the king's palace, where the sovereign abides as a guest. To them he is pleased to grant free access and daily audience. He exalts the judge, enlightens the scholar, instructs the artist, regulates the merchants, conducts the musicians, inspects and cleanses the library and treasury of the master of rolls. But his greatest delight is to abide in the throne-room, supporting and guiding the authority of the king. With gracious might he increases his power, and enthrones him in glory. In the presence and by the might of this lord of lords, King Thelema's dominion is more than restored, and himself and his subjects made to rejoice in redemptive grace.

The key to this parable scarcely needs to be supplied. The kingdom is the human soul. In it the imagination is the artist, who fills the mind with ideals good or evil. Conscience is the judge, approving the right and protesting against wrong. Desires are the merchantmen who go abroad in the hope of gaining the possessions they long for. Emotions and affections are the musicians that blend in concord or clash in discord. Memory is the master of rolls, who acts as sacristan, librarian, and historian all in one.

But the sovereign faculty in the human soul is the will. With its attitude of rebellion or submission all other faculties are identified and involved. There hinges the destiny of the soul. There is the battle-ground where the forces of righteousness and evil must contend, and upon the issue turns the question of the soul's salvation in glory or its overthrow and condemnation in shame.

I.

THE THRONE-ROOM AND THE KING.

Free will is essential to man, indispensable to moral action and to rational action as well. Consciousness affirms it, and conscience would have no significance if it did not exist. Take it away, and every man is a mere machine. Every man knows that he decides his own action and would not be a man if he did not. . . . It is not strange that the mysteries of human life should suggest doubts of freedom, or that terribly convincing arguments against it should be possible. . . . The fact that freedom is set about with limits, and may be impaired by evil, does not destroy its claim to be a real power. . . . *The will is a rightful sovereign over a rebellious kingdom.* Its nature is still regal, but its power is limited by the inharmonious elements in the man himself. . . . What man needs is the inbreathing of a holy, spiritual energy that shall enable the will to *reassume and hold its normal place.*—*W. N. Clarke.*

I.

THE THRONE-ROOM AND THE KING.

“It is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.”—*St. Paul.*

IN exploring that wondrous palace, “the inner man,” we come first to the throne-room of our being. From that mystic chamber issue all the activities that constitute the daily round of life. Trace the stream of all our doings to its secret source, and the springs thereof will be found proceeding out of the throne that reigns in our life. There dwells the sovereign of the soul. There, in the first place of power, vested with kingly authority, ruling with absolute right, is the imperial faculty known to us as the human will. Its regency determines our conduct for time, and moulds our destiny for eternity. It intermingles with the exercises of all other faculties. There can be no voluntary action on the part of the soul that does not require the active co-operation of the will. No thought

can tarry in the mind without its consent, nor can it crystallize in the forms of speech save by its special command. No emotion can abide in the heart unless voluntarily entertained, nor can the strongest feelings focalize into action apart from will's specific sanction. It is true that there is a subtle something that we have named "disposition," which exercises a crafty influence in every department of the soul's activity.

Sometimes we are tempted to make our general bent the scapegoat of our misconduct. But disposition is not a distinctive faculty. It is that tendency which grows out of the convergent activities of all the faculties. It is the moral atmosphere of the soul which may be beneficial or deleterious. The co-operation of all the faculties constitutes the mind, and the tendency thereof the spirit of the mind. We are commanded to be renewed in the spirit of our mind; but this assumes that the faculties themselves have been subject to the power of regenerating grace. In the last analysis we find the authority of responsible life resident in the will.

The will is sovereign because it exercises the attributes of lordship over all other

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faculties. Each faculty in the soul has its own unique function, but it has no play in life without the consent and co-operation of the will. The conscience may utter its verdicts concerning right and wrong, good and evil; but unless the will carries out these edicts they become worse than dead letters, and conscience sinks into a void factor in life. Imagination may catch sight of the truest ideals; yet, if the will does not resolve to pursue and apprehend them, the visions fade and vanish. The emotions may be keyed to the noblest acts of self-sacrifice; but, if the will fails to strike them into immediate action, they soon lose the tension of Christlike sympathy. And thus we might run through the entire catalogue of human faculties, only to find that their latent powers are dwarfed or developed in exact proportion to the will's use or abuse of their lawful exercise. If the will co-operates with the respective exercises of the several faculties, they serve to develop a full-rounded character. But, if they be denied their lawful function through the will's inertia, they must deteriorate. They cannot help themselves; they are subject to the sovereignty of the will.

We speak of the will as fundamental, because we discover it behind every activity of mind and body. We cannot go further into the mysterious palace of the soul than the throne-room. We discover nothing deeper than the will. It marshals all motives, and starts them into action, or holds them inert. It summons all thoughts, and drives them backward through memory, or forward through imagination. It commands them to bury themselves in silence, or go abroad in the garments of speech. It inspects all emotions, desires, and affections, sealing them with approval, or condemning them with reprobation. It moves in the secret depths of the soul, and reigns in the outer court of visible acts. All the doings of life may be explained by the volitions of the will, but we cannot explain the secret power that moves within or behind it. It works within all other faculties and they work upon it. The will is the primary thing in personality. It lies at the foundation of responsibility, and there we are at the base-line of character.

The strength of the will determines the force of personality. Its weakness or vigor becomes the gauge by which we estimate

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character. It is not a vivid imagination, nor a sensitive conscience, nor right desires, nor retentive memory, that measure a man's feebleness or power. Only what the will resolves and performs decides what a man really is. The development of some one faculty may constitute genius, but not character. A poet may be visited by visions of virtue, grace, and truth, and yet live in a liaison with vice, corruption, and delusion. A man may have sufficient strength of reason to analyze and classify the phenomena of nature; he may be voted an astute philosopher, and yet be an evil man. Sensitive and sympathetic emotions are often dragged down by the curse of intemperance. History affords abundant illustrations of men who have been reputed great in arts and science, musicians, artists, poets, philosophers, jurists, and literati, men famed as geniuses in every department of physical and metaphysical learning, who have, despite their erudition, made shipwreck of character. Genius without purity of purpose and virility of will is one of the saddest spectacles of life. How many noble ideals lie shattered about an enervated will! The fault was not with the

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soul's artist. Imagination painted great possibilities on the horizon of hope, but an indolent will allowed them to fade and dissolve. The defect was not in the soul's judge. Conscience interpreted a holy law, but a sluggish will declined to establish it in action. Emotions pleaded for right, and the understanding gave wise counsel, but the soul's sovereign was paralyzed with the luxury of sinful indulgence, and weakly sighed its "No."

On the other hand, men of very mediocre gifts have become potent factors for good in human society. There are men whom nature has not endowed with remarkable talent, whom heredity has denied the quickened pulse of cleverness, and whose circumstances gave little room for the development of mental qualities and latent aptitude. They will never rank as men of genius, and yet they make great contributions to the moral forces that make for righteousness. The great secret of their power lies in a simple but mighty method. They are resolved that such ideals as the mind apprehends the will must translate into actual life, and the principles of right as they understand them must become the

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immediate rule of conduct. The will is the strong thing with them, and everything which the other faculties discover, apprehend, and approve they resolve to turn to profitable account. There is no sight more worthy of challenging admiration than a soul of mediocre endowment making the most of every possibility, and by the sovereign exercise of a firm resolve turning to use every opportunity for the enrichment of character. The reward of such fidelity is as great to the man with two talents as to him that hath five.

It must be evident from our consideration of the place and power of the will that the first and essential yielding of the soul to God must take place in the throne-room of our being. The will must submit its regency to the authority of God. All the other faculties dwell in chambers adjoining the throne-room, but from none of these can access be obtained to the whole man. All the bolts are on the inside. The various compartments may be so locked from one another that the entrance of God's Spirit into one is by no means a guaranty that the whole palace is open to his grace. But, when once the will draws the bolt of the

soul's citadel, and surrenders its sceptre of authority to God's will, his Spirit may freely enter every chamber of the heart, and work in it both to will and to work for his good pleasure. If, therefore, the will is yielded to God, the whole man is reconciled and consecrated; whereas, if he is shut out from this centre, the whole man is in alienation and rebellion.

From the human side the first duty of man is to surrender the will to God. From the divine side the first thing is the conversion of the will. What do we mean by the conversion of the will? Though sovereign, the will must act in the interests of righteousness or sin. Sin makes its appeal through fleshly appetites and carnal craving. If the will yields to the temptation of unlawfully indulging the bodily desires, it soon loses the power to control them; and then, instead of being a sovereign, it falls to the place of being a servant. In the sinful man the will is a Samson shorn of his strength, blinded in vision, harnessed to passion, and made to grind out fleshly gratification in the mill of sinful habit. Desires, made to be servants, leap into the throne, and rule the soul and spirit. But

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even in its dishonored condition the will has ever a place of refuge. With all its weakness, shame, and sinfulness, it may flee into the presence of God, and yield itself to his sovereign might. Renouncing the service of the hidden works of darkness, it is accepted by God in the service of righteousness and truth. In its surrender the will yields all its members to be instruments of righteousness. The will represents and acts for the whole man. In the reconciliation the Lord covenants the re-establishment of the will as sovereign of the soul. And, though its supremacy may be questioned and opposed by appetites made strong in sinful habit, yet it henceforth occupies the throne as the vicegerent of God, and exercises lordship in the interests of his kingdom and glory.

The second thing from the human side is a steadfast, continual submission of the will to the will of God. From the divine side this abiding in the will of God is met with new supplies of daily strength, enabling the soul to live well pleasing to the Father. Even in the converted soul the will is impaired and relatively weak. Servitude in the bondage of sin has left its marks

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that cannot be effaced at once. The tyranny of sin, established through habit, is not easily broken. Again and again the soul feels itself slipping back into captivity because the will cannot successfully resist the invasion of temptations once indulged. At such times the tortured soul may adopt the words of Paul as expressing its own experience,—“The good which I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I practise. I find then the law that to me, who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” This lament is the Miserere of one who feels the inadequacy of a rightly disposed but weakened will to triumph over the forces of evil. Some habit overtakes it and carries it away captive. Or some duty confronts it, and it cannot find the strength to rise and do it. It desires the good; it knows the right; it approves the ideal; but, when it comes to the doing, it falters and halts with weakness.

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The resource of an enfeebled will is a yielding of itself to God that he may vitalize it with power. He will strengthen it, not by the impartation of some abstract force; but, passing himself into the will, he makes it the channel of his might working in it both to will and to work according to his working which worketh mightily. By this method our will becomes the agent of God's will, re-inforced with his great power.

The Lord Jesus Christ had a human will, but it was so wholly subjected to the purposes of God that it became the instrument of doing the good pleasure of his Father. Touch his life at any point you please, and you will invariably find that the will of God was the motive power that worked in and by his own will. As a lad sitting in the temple among the doctors he affirms, "I must be about my Father's business." He explains the purpose of his incarnation in the words, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." He justifies the wisdom and authority of his ministry, saying, "My judgment is just because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." So absorbed

was he with the passion of his spiritual ministry that even bodily appetites failed to warn him of necessary food. And, when his disciples pressed him, saying, "Master, eat," he answered: "I have meat to eat that ye know not . . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work." Follow him into the secret sanctuary of devotion, and his worship sums up in the prayer, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." See him in the great crisis of his agony, and still we hear the same words, "Not my will, but thine, be done." In the throne-room of his being God was exalted.

His will was so rooted in the will of God, and God's will so vitalizing his will, that no possible scrutiny could distinguish between them. They became fused into one. And so perfectly did the will of Christ express and execute the will of the Father that, if they had exchanged places, the Father coming into Christ's humiliation, and Christ ascending into the Father's glory, there would have been no difference in a single detail. Every word and work would stand exactly as they do to-day. Indeed, he so perfectly wrought the will of

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God that he could say: "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. . . . My Father worketh even until now, and I work . . . The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." Because their wills were identical, he lived by the Father and the Father lived in him.

Were we to study the utterances of the apostles concerning the mysteries of their mighty ministries, we should come upon the identical secret, so clearly manifest in the life of Jesus. The words at the head of this chapter give the formula of Christian dynamics. It is God who works in us. A magnet has but little native power: yet, when it becomes charged with the current of electric energy, its lifting power becomes increased and manifolded. So the will of man, even though regenerate, may lack virility and strength; but, if it be yielded as an instrument to God and be made the current of the divine will, it will be strengthened with might by his Spirit. God will work in it to will. That is, he will re-en-

force its power of decision. It will not oscillate between the pleadings of the flesh and the demands of the Spirit. Its choice will turn Godward as readily as the magnetic needle turns toward the north; and, having chosen, its resolve is fixed, for God is working in the choice. Then he further works to execute the will's election. He constrains every energy, and nerves the soul to do. Having wrought his choice in the will, he next works his purposes through it. St. Paul experienced this when he said, "I labor also, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

Spiritual power, then, is not an abstract gift, nor can it be measured by weight, dimension, or velocity as we measure nature's forces. It is an attribute of God. And since an attribute cannot be separated from the source in which it inheres, it follows that God cannot give us his power apart from giving himself. The surrender and submission of the will opens the gateway of life for his entrance. And while he has light for the conscience, wisdom for the understanding, love for the emotions, and renewal for the disposition, yet his power manifests itself in the throne-room where

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he delights to exalt and support the sovereignty of the will. If, then, this faculty is under his control, it is God who works behind all, who builds at the base-line of character, who moulds in us the image of his Son, and works by us the labor that shall ultimately be our crown of glory.

II.

THE JUDGMENT-HALL AND THE CHIEF
MAGISTRATE.

Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak
His powerful sound with an organ weak.

—*Shakespeare.*

While each of our senses or appetites has a restricted sphere of operation, it is the function of conscience to survey the whole constitution of our being, and assign limits to the gratification of all our various passions and desires; . . . for to conscience is assigned the prerogative of both judging and restraining them all. Its power may be insignificant, but its title is undisputed; and, "if it had might as it has right, it would govern the world." It is this faculty, distinct from and superior to all appetites, passions, and tastes, that makes virtue the supreme law of life, and adds an imperative character to the feeling of attraction it inspires. It is this which was described by Cicero as the God ruling within us; by the Stoics, as the sovereignty of reason; by St. Paul, as the law of nature; by Butler, as the supremacy of conscience.—*Lecky.*

II.

THE JUDGMENT-HALL AND THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE.

“Herein do I also exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and men alway.”—*St. Paul.*

FROM the throne-room with its majestic beauty we turn to visit and inspect the soul's judgment-hall. Here we behold another faculty, exalted by undisputed right to the function of judging the moral qualities of life's issues. Controversy may gather about the claim of the divine right of kings, but no dispute can ever succeed in disproving the divine right of conscience. It may be dishonored and denied its constitutional supremacy, but it will never abdicate its God-given place in the human soul. So long as it lives its utterances will be with uncompromising authority. And, when the character and conduct of man come before God for final judgment, conscience will approve the decree that fixes

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the eternal destiny of the soul. It is, therefore, of vital moment that we make a conscience void of offence the aim of every action.

Very solemn powers are vested in the chief magistrate who sits at the head of the nation's judiciary. He represents the last court of appeal, and his decisions become law. Decrees of lower tribunals he may reverse or confirm; motions he may grant or deny; sentences he may sanction or set aside. His is the final word of judgment, mandate, and law. His decisions must stand as differentiating right and wrong. There is a majesty pertaining to the chief justice which sovereign and subject, squire and serf, must acknowledge. Subjection to his authority and opposition to it are the moulds in which a nation's order and anarchy are fashioned.

Conscience is the chief justice in the soul of man. The function of this faculty is to recognize the difference between right and wrong, and so become the lawgiver to all other faculties. The secrets of the heart, all motives, desires, ambitions, and imaginations, must pass under the scrutiny of conscience. Its counsel should give direc-

tion to all conduct and conversation, its secret chambers be the moulding-place of all experience. To its authority every faculty must accord the supreme place. The order or anarchy of the soul hinges upon the place we give to conscience. Peace or tumult of experience waits upon our subjection to its right of rule or rebellion against it. Upon its walls are ever written the verdicts, "Well done, good and faithful servant," or "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting." Eternal destiny turns upon the soul's loyalty to the demands and light of conscience. The empire of the soul will achieve glory or disaster as it waits in loyalty upon the jurisdiction of this chief magistrate, conscience.

We cannot enter upon the vast literature embodying the various philosophies concerning the nature and function of this faculty. We must come at once to that phase of the subject which may be considered from the view-point of experience. Man, created in the image of God, has a knowledge that discerns the difference between good and evil in motive, between right and wrong in action. Whatever

blight has fallen upon the faculties through sin, or however this particular faculty may have become impaired, it is still there. Even under the most unfavorable circumstances, man has sufficient knowledge to make him morally responsible. The law of God is written in the conscience, and therefore it is God's counsellor in the soul. It is not a faculty created by education or acquired by experience. It is "native here, and to the manner born." It is that mystic voice of which Isaiah writes, "When ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left," "thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way; walk ye in it." Behind all the clamor of imperious desire, the tumult of swelling passion, the specious pleading of emotion, and the sophistry of reason conscience ever speaks as a witness of God in the soul. The image of God may be blurred almost beyond recognition; yet, wherever man is found, the regal nature of conscience is attested.

Among the heathen and barbarous tribes of earth we find religions very wide of the truth; yet the very compulsion to worship somewhat and the morbid sense that drives

to sacrifices revolting both witness the presence and stern demands of conscience. The shades of variety and degrees of sensitiveness may be endless, but the solemn sense, "I ought," dwells in every human heart. The great diversity and gradations of conscience may be partly explained by environment, education, training, obedience, and other incidental causes and modifying circumstances. The Scriptures recognize such degrees and differences. By the development of revelation, the progress of responsibility, and the education of the conscience they are ever pushing duty to a higher notch. But all this has to do with the *judgment* of the conscience; it does not affect the *nature* of the faculty or its organic function in the constitution of the soul. Its judgment may be confused by a thousand delusions, but its sense of obligation abides loyal to God.

We may summarize the essence and office of this spiritual sense by saying that it is the law of God written in the constitution of man. As faith lays hold upon the knowledge of God through revelation, so conscience lays hold upon the will of God through the sense of obligation. It is the

faculty which lies nearest to God. It is the avenue by which he finds access to the soul, convicts it of sin and shortcoming, and drives it to the throne of grace for salvation. It is the alphabet of God's language with man. Master it, and you have the key to the mysteries of his wisdom and grace, and by it you may attain a fellowship with him in holiness and glory. It has a vocabulary of four simple words: good and evil, right and wrong. Amid the duties of life these will admit of great variety in declension and conjugation, but they four constitute the elements of its vernacular. With these it moves among the desires, and proclaims them spiritual or carnal. It enters the studio of the imagination, pronouncing its visions pure or defiled. It criticises the orchestra of emotions, judging the feelings as true or false. It treads the very throne-room; and, standing before the sovereign will, it approves every right motive, saying, "Thou doest well that it is in thine heart," or boldly denounces every evil, crying, "It is not lawful for thee" to do thus.

It is of greatest moment that conscience should be illuminated in judgment as well

as obeyed in its compulsions. The first thing in the development of conscience is loyalty to its constraining impulses. It may be so trained and developed through fidelity to its promptings as to become a perfect legislator for God in all the activities of life. Or it may be abused, debauched, and seared until its light is put out and the very sense of obligation decays. In the one case the soul ever sails on the tide that moves towards the throne of God, and comes at last to anchor in the glory of his perfect will; in the other it drifts amid temptations, making shipwreck of faith, sinking beneath the "wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, . . . for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever." When the will is obedient to the voice of conscience, there will not be lacking floods of light for its illumination. "Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge." "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God." That is to say, loyalty to the sense of doing God's will shall be rewarded by such enlightenment of judgment that there will be no doubt as to what that will is and how it must be done.

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Paul's experience will serve as an illustration here. From his forefathers he served God in a pure conscience. Even that never-forgotten chapter of his life, in which he describes himself as a "blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious," was enacted under the sense of a good conscience. Rehearsing this part of his career before Agrippa, he says, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." His judgment was sadly astray, while his sense of duty was true. Following that sense of "I ought," he soon met with the light that corrected his "I thought." A heavenly vision rose within his conscience; and, following the new light with the same vigor of duty, he became the foremost apostle of Christianity. Resolve upon doing the will of God at any cost, and some heavenly vision will soon direct you into the knowledge of what his will is. "When conscience wakes and speaks, it means that man is in spiritual contact with God, that God is making his will felt in the depths of man's constitution." Then God is on the throne; let all else keep silence. "The lamp of thy body is thine eye: when

thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Look, therefore, whether the light that is in thee be not darkness. If, therefore, thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light." This is Christ's parable describing the conscience. It is the eye of the soul, designed to let the light of God's truth and will flood the entire being. To keep it single means to be loyal to its sense of obligation and diligent in the cultivation of its judgment.

When we fail to maintain a conscience void of offence, it must become a nemesis to our wrong-doing. What a blackened track its retributions evidence, as we read the career of sinners whose history is written in the Scriptures! Adam trembling with fear seeks to hide himself from God. Amid the shades of Eden's garden he hears the challenge, "Where art thou?" What is his answer? "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Who told him that he was naked? Conscience. There

was the first outcry of the soul's wounded judge. How much wretchedness lay latent in his fear, flight, and confession! All the Miserere of human repentance and remorse, all the groaning sorrows of history, had their beginning in that moan of Adam's wounded conscience, "I was naked." It was the orphaned soul fearing and fleeing from God. When Jacob's sons stood before the ruler of Egypt, he accused them of being spies. They honestly repudiated the charge. Then why did they shudder in dismay? Out of that forgotten yesterday, conscience was dragging a far graver indictment, while "they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear." When David's indignation was roused by the recital of an imaginary incident, the prophet threw his angry outburst back upon himself, saying, "Thou art the man." Why did he not resent the audacity of Nathan, and deliver him to the jailer's care? Because conscience lifted the veil of his innermost soul, exposed the skeleton of his closet, pointed out the hideous corruption of his heart, and wrung from him the

wail, "I have sinned." What drove the widow into Elijah's presence with the unbidden confession, "O thou man of God, thou art come unto me to bring my sin to remembrance"? What made Herod tremble at the reports concerning Jesus, and whisper his fearful suspicion, "It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead"? What agony of despair was it that groaned in the demoniacs' "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" What remorseful power hurried Judas back with his blood-money, and, when he had avowed his betrayal of innocent blood, dragged him into the maelstrom of despair and self-murder? The answer to all such questioning is, The nemesis of conscience.

There is no escape from the working of this mysterious faculty. The soul may slight, ignore, and silence this monitor; but it ever follows in the wake of man's doings, and its very muteness is eloquent with rebuke. It may be finally insulted; and then, instead of being a counsellor in the soul, its mockery is echoed from every incident, circumstance, and situation of life. Man may try to kill it as did Herod behead the Baptist. But still it ever rises from the grave

with the burden of heavier crimes than before. Every man carries his own tribunal within his own breast. Even in this life conscience erects a judgment-seat, and makes the guilty tremble at their own sin. The blood-stain of Scotland's murdered king was so deep and foul on the souls of Macbeth and his wife that all the waters of the sea or the sweet perfumes of Arabia could not serve to sweeten or cleanse away their guilt. Conscience made of him a coward. Every noise appalled him; every imagination had the spectre of a ghost. He dared not walk the halls of memory. He could only shudder on their threshold with the cry, "I am afraid to think what I have done; look on't again, I dare not." Richard III. in the blackness of his guilt found that "conscience is a thousand swords, . . . the worm that still begnaws the soul." It had a thousand several tongues that proclaimed him for a villain. It gathered up his misdeeds, and sent them beforehand to judgment; and, as they crowded about God's throne, crying, "Guilty, guilty," conscience echoed deep in his own soul, "Despair and die." So, then, even in this life sins have found their authors out. Even

here the judgment of eternity has been anticipated, as the guilty soul has heard the words,

“The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labor ;
With Cain go wander through the shade of night.”

And, when the issues of life appear for final trial, conscience must turn State's evidence. At its bidding memory will bring the carefully preserved record of sin and shame; imagination must reveal the secret ideals of corruption; affections will own their unholy liaisons; desires expose their contraband lusts, and the captive will come forth like a blind Samson, enslaved, uncrowned, and its regal force debauched in the service. Conscience is the sounding-board of eternity. If we would avoid the thunders of final doom, let us maintain it void of small offences now.

A good conscience is no less mighty than an evil one. Its ability to approve and justify is no less than its power to accuse and condemn. The heroes of faith whose valorous deeds are exploited in the epistle to the Hebrews all had witness borne unto them that they pleased God. The con-

sciousness of doing the will of God made the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and reformers invincible. When God said to Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased," it was a good conscience that sounded the joy of the Lord through his being. Conscience does not make cowards of us all. A bad conscience makes a craven. A good conscience makes a hero whom nothing daunts in life or death, who has no fear for time or eternity. Examine the world's benefactors of any age; explore the foundations of their strength; and beyond all the combinations of singular opportunity, behind the glitter of brilliant genius, and beneath the force of unique individuality you will find that the strength of character, augmented by divine wisdom and power, builds itself upon a good conscience void of offence towards God and men. Such a conscience catches up all the promises of grace, and incarnates them in life and conduct. It becomes the holy of holies in the soul, where the presence of the Lord dwells. It has a transfiguring power. The Holy Spirit can radiate through a good conscience and make manifest the life of Christ in us as the hope of

glory. It is the pure heart that sees God, and, beholding his glory, is transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

Since gaining a good conscience must be the ambition of every exercise in the daily life, how may we come by this priceless treasure? There are three distinct stages in the process. It must be *obtained*, *retained*, and *attained*. As an *obtainment* we can have a conscience void of offence towards God only through the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. The sense of obligation and accountability convicts us of sinfulness, and conscience can never absolve us from the transgressions of our yesterdays. We must kneel at the foot of Calvary's cross, and by simple faith receive the remission of our sins. There the revelation breaks into our darkened hearts, and we learn that "God made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanses our conscience from dead works." And, as the soul in the consciousness of its cleansing worships the Lord, the night passes, the day dawns, and

shadows are fled away; there is no more conscience of sins. God having spoken his gracious pardon, the soul may wipe out of the memory every stain of past transgression. It may confidently turn its back upon all the yesterdays, and forget the things that are behind in the divine assurance that "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

A good conscience is *retained* by owning the supremacy of its authority in all the details of life. It is by means of our physical nature that we have commerce with the world about us. There on the lowest plane of our nature dwell the appetites of the body. The limit of their necessary indulgence is put to the strain; and, if they are humored beyond what is meet, an abnormal craving tends to thrust them into the place of mastery instead of abiding in service. On the intellectual plane we have capacities for the acquirement of wisdom and knowledge. These are meant to serve us for our greatest profit. Yet they, too, may be enticed from purity of purpose and made the forces serving pride and carnal ambition. On the plane of the spiritual nature we have the moral instincts which

impose responsibility and obligation. These all must find exercise in subjection to the conscience. If the motions of the flesh are given play irrespective of the laws of conscience, if thoughts and imaginations are allowed to run riot through the mind instead of being brought captive to Christ in the conscience, then the anarchy of sin must work death in the soul.

In the city of Edinburgh the famous castle towers above all other sections of the city. At the exact second of the noon hour a gun is fired from the castle, indicating the royal time. As the sound rolls over the city, there is an instinctive comparison of watches and clocks with the royal time. The utmost confusion would reign if there were no regulation by a standard time. If every individual insisted upon ignoring the royal time, and conducted his duties upon a schedule determined by the erratic movement of his own little watch, commerce would tumble into disorder, railroads meet with disaster, homes be inconvenienced, and regularity be obstructed. In the matter of time the royal gun must be given the supreme place and all details of life must be ordered accordingly. Even so

a good conscience is retained only as we "make conscience of all things." Every other faculty must be subservient thereto. The will must execute its demands, the imagination be governed by its light, the emotions submit to its verdicts, and the memory treasure its commendations. With such a place, conscience may move through all the chambers of the soul, and be retained without offence towards God and men.

A good conscience must be *attained* by the enlightenment and education of its judgment. It is at this point that conscience needs to be strengthened with might by God's Spirit. Its "I thought" must become as unerring as its "I ought." A strong sense of responsibility without an accurate knowledge of duty will make a blind giant. It needs vision as well as strength. Feeling the necessity of doing God's will, and yet ignorant of what his will is, an unenlightened conscience may compel the soul to fight against God under the very supposition that it is fighting for him. Such were Saul and his kinsmen Jews; they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. There is such a

conscience in all fanaticism, good in its sense of oughtness, but helplessly astray in its judgment.

To attain knowledge, there must first be loyalty to the sense of obligation. In following this sense we may and shall make mistakes through ignorance, but in so doing we are fulfilling the condition upon which light is promised. God will not leave in ignorance the soul that honestly seeks to do his will. The education of conscience is conditioned on practising that which we already know; studying the Scriptures, which reveal God's purposes of grace; and communing with him in the fellowship of prayer. In this regard a conscience may be good, better, and best according to the ratio of its knowledge of the will of God. As the light of truth pours into its judgment, the sense of "I ought" is deepened. And, as the sense of duty responds to the knowledge attained, it preserves its goodness void of offence. By such exercise its discernment becomes ever more acute, and the sense of moral flavor more perceptive. A growing conscience will ever make larger resignations and sacrifices. It will not stop at putting away doubtful indulgences, but

in its holy ambition to be most pleasing to God a rich conscience will resign lawful privileges to obtain the pearl of greatest price. Its aspiration will become less and less occupied with what may be displeasing, and more and more absorbed with what is most pleasing to God.

As the conscience attains a deeper knowledge of God's will, it will become necessary to exercise great patience and sympathy with those who are weak in the faith. My brother may allow what my conscience condemns. But let me not lose patience with him who halts for ten weeks where I stumbled ten long years. Let me rather pray and hope not that he may blindly jump to my position, but that he may receive light by which he may come there in wisdom and power. On the other hand, my brother may draw a line where I exercise indulgence. I may not accuse him of narrowness. He may be in advance of me, and I may some day stand at his place and judge my present position very inferior. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind, and let all walk according to the law of love. We may not compromise our loy-

alty to the highest demands of conscience, but we may act in such love that the weakest brother shall not stumble over our scruples. If, on the other side, we find liberty to act beyond another's knowledge, love should prompt us to forego such freedom for his sake. Were he to exercise our freedom without our faith, he would be sinning against his sense of oughtness, and in so doing destroy his own soul. Better restrain our freedom to the bounds of his knowledge than by transgressing wound the monitor of God within him.

A good conscience is not one that through innocence has no sense of past sin, nor one that has lost it through forgetfulness. A good conscience is one that was washed from its sin in the blood of Jesus Christ, is saved from sin by the supremacy of its authority, and is triumphant over sin by enlightenment and conquest. It lies with us whether this chief magistrate of the soul shall be to us a curse or a blessing. We may set him at naught, silence, wound, brand, imprison him. But some day he will rise with retribution in his train. Then will he visit upon us the sins which we had forgotten, and make us cry out our own shame while every voice of

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memory mocks at our despair. We may enthrone, honor, serve, and obey his authority. Then will he guide, counsel, and comfort us. And, when at last life's trials, duties, and temptations are all over, this judge will assume the priest's mitre, and come forth to echo the approval and benediction of our God. In the light of his glory we shall find that conscience was ever the guest-chamber where God delighted to dwell. Let us exercise ourselves to keep it void of offence; so shall our Redeemer be enthroned as Lord of our being.

“ Stern lawgiver ! Yet dost thou wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face.”
— *Wordsworth.*

III.

THE STUDIO AND THE ARTIST.

Physical investigation, more than anything besides, helps to teach us the actual value and right use of the imagination, . . . that wondrous faculty which, . . . properly controlled by experience and reflection, becomes the noblest attribute of man, the source of poetic genius, the instrument of discovery to science ; without the aid of which Newton would never have invented fluxions, nor Davy have decomposed the earths and alkalis, nor would Columbus have found another continent. . . . We find ourselves gifted with the power of forming visions of the ultra-sensible ; and by this power, when duly chastened and controlled, we can lighten the darkness which surrounds the world of the senses. There are Tories even in science, who regard imagination as a faculty to be feared and avoided rather than employed. Imagination becomes the prime mover of the physical discoverer. Newton's passage from a falling apple to a falling moon was at the outset a leap of the imagination. In Faraday the exercise of this faculty preceded all his experiments. . . . Without this power our knowledge of nature would be a mere tabulation of co-existences and sequences.—*Tyndall*.

III.

THE STUDIO AND THE ARTIST.

TO-DAY we cross the threshold of the soul's studio. To this chamber we do not allow freedom of access to our most intimate friends. There sits the artist secretly working out the ideals of our inmost desires and ambitions. Some designs he has wrought to completion; others remain but dreams of beauty whose end cannot be foreshadowed. Some designs are already become historic; others but sketch the outlines of distant hopes. This secret workman, whose vision outruns the eye, and whose hearing catches sounds too attenuated for the ear's apprehension, this genius who makes his visions and dreams the ideal and inspiration of life, is the imagination. Therefore we call this faculty the artist of the soul.

To an unconscious degree are we debtors to the secret workings of imagination. Ours is a prosaic age, in which the genius

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of this faculty is apt to be discredited, and the spirit of wonder and admiration must give way to the investigator, analyst, and critic. Imagination may be allowed a little scope in idle moments. It may sing the songs of our childhood and recall the dreams of youth. It may turn the album where hopes lie faintly sketched, and give us visions beyond the narrow limits where circumstances hold us prisoners. Like the camera obscura, imagination may catch the distant scene, and stimulate the heart worn weary with discouragement. The soldier by the camp-fire, the sailor on the far-off seas, the tourist in foreign lands, and the exiled convict in prison cell may through the imagination run away home, look upon the familiar fireside, see the well-known forms, and hear the music of love's voices. But there is nothing real about it. We strike the earth with a thud of consciousness, and awaken with a sigh that all was a dream. A few vocations of life may turn imagination to practical purposes. The art of poet, painter, and musician may beguile us of reality when we become weary with the strain. We submit ourselves to the genius of their fancy, but all

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the while we hold in subconsciousness the sense that we are playing with things unreal. Their rhymes, sketches, and scores are a phantasmagoria, permitted as an indulgence. But, if we would achieve success in life, we must not allow imagination to cheat us with its air-castles, and prevent our pursuing the stern prose of material facts.

This is a materialistic age, dealing with the physical as the bases of all things. That which we may apprehend through the physical senses, that which has size and avoirdupois, which we can measure and weigh, analyze and control, that is real. Ambition for success must be content to abide on that level, and not fly into the air of fancy. It is a realm in which reason is the voice of authority. Anything that cannot be searched to its origin, traced through its sequences, predicated in results, may not receive the mark "sterling." Imagination deals with too many things that cannot be focused into tangible reality; and therefore it stands discredited as a practical factor in a practical world. Its power is too hypnotic, suggesting the absurd and impossible. Only the fool follows its guid-

ance. The wise man credits nothing which he cannot prove, accepts nothing that he cannot take into the laboratory for examination. He enthrones reason as the censor of all things, from whose verdict there is no appeal. Lord of the past, critic of the present, prophet of the future, reason must be chief counsellor to the soul. Though its vision be near-sighted and its voice inflected with interrogation points, its manifestoes will need the less revision, and so prove safe. Let reason be invested with such glorious sovereignty, and it becomes an easy matter to shunt imagination off to a side-track, reserving it for excursion trips into fancy-land during leisure moments, but never to be trusted with treasures of reality on the main line.

Despite this, imagination still survives. It lives in secret, fearing ridicule. It does not display its imagery in public; but in the soul's studio this artist faculty is steadily working to counteract dejection, discouragement, and despair. It is usually optimistic, and with its looking on the bright side of things and discovering new possibilities it heals depression, stimulates hope,

and inspires renewed effort. Imagination is one of the most practical forces in the world. Could we look behind the energies that move in human history, we should find that its nerve forces and sinews are supplied by those things upon which imagination feeds. As individuals we should be slow to admit that wonderful panorama that passes through our minds, or to confess that we take these visions in any serious sense. Yet a little meditation will soon convince us how far-reaching and practical is the influence of this imagery in that it secretly moulds our hopes and ambitions.

A faculty everywhere so potent cannot be excluded from Christian experience. Somewhere it must find place and play. Religion neither dwarfs nor destroys a faculty. Christianity engages to bring every faculty to its lawful and highest development, give it the best field for exercise, and use it for the accomplishment of the soul's salvation. Imagination is the mind's eye. By it we look through the things which are seen with the physical eye at the things seen with only the mental vision.

Science takes account of actual facts, and its deductions and conclusions are supposed

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to set forth the accurate knowledge concerning facts. But the course of science has not always been smooth and even. Its triumphs have been so great that sometimes error has sheltered itself under the prestige of its reputation for truth; and no matter how wide of reality a theory might be, if it could only secure the label "scientific," there were those who gave it unquestioned credulity and support. Even science has been imposed upon until its history is also punctuated with "revisions," and some of its theories exploited as "heresies." But we have no quarrel with achievements of scientific investigation. We only plead that in the light of its revisions and heresies we, too, may exercise a reasonable scepticism until its suppositions find a focus in facts.

For its triumphs in discovering and formulating truth science is a great debtor to imagination. The passage quoted from Professor Tyndall at the beginning of this chapter is unequivocal in its admission. If we follow the track of its suggestion, we shall find that our knowledge of astronomic science rests upon the discoveries of imagination, chemical science roots itself in the

atom, seen only with the mind's eye, and that physical philosophy builds upon that attenuated thing called ether. The foundations of our scientific structures have been gathered and laid by imagination. The historian makes a loom of this faculty, and upon it he weaves the yesterdays into history. The statesman compels mental vision to focus existing conditions and tendencies, and so forecasts the to-morrow. The scientist views the ultra-sensible, and by imagination brings the far-off facts to the crucible of human reason. Reason has no function until imagination brings the grist to the mill.

What may not the imagination accomplish when guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, as it climbs over the trellis of divine revelation into the spiritual realm? Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man through any physical sense what God hath prepared for them that love him. But he hath revealed them unto us through the Spirit, who, searching all the deep things of God, reflects them into our soul through the imagination. By physical search we may not find out God; but with the soul's sight

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we may know where to find him, and come even unto his seat. With this faculty we may look upon the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, and in as far as it hath pleased him to reveal the mysteries of his will we may apprehend the counsels of eternity.

But before this faculty may journey into the mysteries of spiritual truth it must be emancipated from the dominion and tyranny of sin. If its power for beholding righteousness and serving truth is great, its power for conjuring with evil and serving sinful lust is no less. The sinful soul alienated from the life of God, having the understanding darkened, walks in the vanity of a diseased and corrupt imagination. Knowing God, but refusing to glorify him as God, neither giving thanks, the imagination is given over to vanity, and the senseless, irresponsive heart is darkened. Then this noblest faculty becomes a maddened steed harnessed to sin, driving furiously in the energies of evil lust and passion. Strive as it may, its visions and inspirations all come to vanity and vexation of spirit. Sinners in whom the darkened imagination works find that in the realm of knowledge

they profess themselves to be wise and become fools, who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. In the world of power they imagine a vain thing. They try to break the bands of God, and loose his cords, while he sitteth in the heavens and holds them in derision. For pleasure they hew themselves broken cisterns that cannot contain water, and miss the real fountains of delight. Perverted, the sinful imagination fills the mind with unclean images, the memory with unholy reflections, and the heart with base desires. Designed to be the noblest faculty of the soul, it becomes the very genius of corruption and evil.

In the soul's new birth the imagination is brought under the control of the Holy Spirit and reclaimed for God. The same act of grace that operates upon the conscience and co-operates with the will moves upon the imagination, and enlightens the eyes of the understanding. Henceforth it is the organ with which the pure in heart see God. But does not such a statement confound imagination with faith? And what is faith? Without attempting any exhaustive definition, it may be said to have

at least three elements: A knowledge of God revealed to us only through the soul's sight or imagination, an assurance born of knowledge and experience, trust and hope growing out of knowledge and assurance. Imagination, then, is the pioneer faculty of faith. It goes abroad in the realms of truth, and enriches the soul with visions of God. Then old things pass away; behold, all things become new. Things once counted a loss are counted a gain, while all the ideals and ambitions of the flesh are cast out, and God is enthroned.

But now this faculty must be strengthened with might by his Spirit. To this end it must feed upon the word of God. Let us understand; the Scriptures of God are not given us for mere formal reading or even diligent memorizing. There is a letter of the word which may remain dead and dull. Only when that word catches fire in the imagination is it made spirit, life, light, and food to the soul. A little observation will convince us that the very form of the Scriptures is designed to appeal to the imagination. A cold, logical, critical dissecting of the Scriptures will never reveal their power, life, or beauty. Their very

style is that of parable and imagery, luring the imagination into the hidden and glorious mysteries of grace.

The natural man struggles to solve some of the enigmas about him; with labor he slowly works his way through physical law to understand the existing order of things; he strives after some semblance of morality, and vainly wonders whither all things tend. But, alas! he is baffled with mystery, burdened with a wounded conscience, fearful of a judgment, hopeless of destiny. Beside him is the spiritual man with imagination illuminated and strengthened. He reads the story of creation, and it takes fire, and within the burning bush he beholds God creating and upholding all things by the word of his power. The imagination strengthened by the Spirit sees more in a glance than the natural man sees with a century's experimentation. He reads the story of the Nazarene; but it catches fire, and within he sees the Son of God, the Ancient of days. The martyrdom of Calvary kindles in his soul, and he sees the altar of the sin-offering and the burnt-offering, and finds peace with God. Imagination follows the vanishing Christ, and

sees him sit at the right hand of God, exalted as Lord and Saviour; it enters every day into the holiest of all, and looks upon the heavenly High Priest, contemplates his beauty, knows its standing as purged of sin and accepted, outruns the ages, and beholds the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. And the visions seen with this eye of the soul become the inspiration of the spiritual life that is hid with Christ in God.

It is utterly beyond us to predicate the wonders that may break upon the vision of the soul through an imagination renewed by the Spirit. We have hints of it in the experiences of the men who by faith walked with God and beheld his glory. But with the course of the ages and the enlargement of revelation we have such increased material that none would venture to prophesy what unexampled glories of spiritual truth will yet focus themselves in the Christian mind.

“While I was musing, the fire kindled.” As we meditate on the word of God, let us pray that we may be strengthened to behold wondrous things, that our souls’ sight may be so strengthened by a Spirit-guided

imagination that we may see through the seen into the unseen, through time into eternity, through the temporal into the abiding. With this faculty we may ascend into heaven and find God there, or descend into hell and know he is there. We may take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, and find we are not beyond the everlasting arms, nor out of the hollow of his upholding hand. We may set the Lord before us, and live in the assurance that we shall not be moved. And, as we journey through the pathway of life, imagination will behold in every situation, circumstance, experience, accident, and incident a burning bush where we may hold fellowship with the eternal God. Thus this artist of the soul will garnish the studio with divine ideals of beauty and holiness, and awaken that hungering and thirsting after righteousness which shall be satisfied and realized when we awake with his likeness, conformed unto his image.

IV.

THE MUSIC-ROOM WITH ITS OR- CHESTRA.

We need some ever-present, ever-welcome influence that shall insensibly tone down our self-asserting and aggressive manners, round off the sharp, offensive angularity of opinions, warm out the genial individual humanity of every unit of society. . . . Rampant liberty will rush to its own ruin unless there shall be found some gentler, harmonizing, humanizing culture, a sweet reverence for something far above us, beautiful and pure ; awakening some ideality in every soul and often lifting us out of the hard, hopeless prose of daily life. We need this beautiful corrective of our crudities. . . . We need to be so enamored of the divine idea of unity that that alone shall be the real motive for the assertion of our individuality. Thus we catch the rhythm of a holy march, and grow attuned to a believing, loving mood, just as the body of a violin, the walls of a music-hall, by much music-making become gradually seasoned into smooth vibration.—*John S. Dwight.*

IV.

THE MUSIC-ROOM WITH ITS ORCHESTRA.

“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,” “giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”—*St. Paul.*

THERE are some people who have no capacity for abstract thought. The technical workings of the law cannot enlist their interest. Literature may be to them an arid waste, and even the poet's skill cannot fire their imagination. The art of the painter finds little or no latent discernment that might be cultivated into an appreciation of a master's genius. Their taste seems to dwell on a dead common level, and circles in the small eddies of monotony. Yet, when they come into the music-room and catch that mystic weaving of sounds into melody and harmony, immediately their whole nature is aglow with pleasure. Even so many minds may evince but little interest in the mysterious operations of con-

science, will, and imagination. They exercise these faculties, but care little about the how or why. The science of psychology has no fascination for them. But focus their attention upon the emotional nature, and at once you have a theme which every shade of mind can grasp. The emotions lie immediately behind all the activities of life, and there all the harmonies or discords of our daily experience have their origin. For this reason there is no chamber of the soul that possesses a greater charm of interest than the music-room.

An orchestra is made up of a number of musicians who perform upon various instruments. These instruments differ in many respects. Some are constructed of wood; others are made of brass. Some make their tones by the vibration of strings, others by vibration of columns of air. Every instrument has its unique quality of tone differentiating it from all others. Each instrument has also its peculiar register of compass of sound, some playing in the upper octaves, such as the violin, piccolo, and cornet, while others range in the lower octaves,—the bassoon, bass viol and trombone. The musicians may play at different

intervals and with a varying number of notes to the same measure. But certain qualifications are demanded of all performers alike before there can be the production of a symphony. Each musician must practise, learn, and know his own part; he must play it in strict co-operation with all the rest; he must key his instrument to the concert pitch; and he must play according to a uniform time, under the guidance of a common leader.

The brotherhood of the human race should be a symphony of fraternal good feeling. A man's association with his neighbors ought to be in accord. Especially ought the fellowship of a Christian with his brethren to be in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." The endless variety of characteristics possessed by Christians is no hindrance to harmony. It is the very possibility for it. Every man has some unique quality which makes him differ from all his fellow beings. It may be a peculiarity of temperament, or some specific gift. And these are possessed amid a great variety of circumstances and conditions. But, if they

all find exercise under the supervision and constraint of the Holy Spirit, they will make for harmony and peace. But the constant tendency and danger are to break away from control.

The jangle of factious strife that swept over the Corinthian church came through a lack of individual subjection and spiritual co-operation. Every individual boasted some personal preference. One championed Paul, another Apollos, a third Cephas, and a fourth Christ. Each man had his own little score and was playing in his own self-chosen time. When they came together, each one had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a revelation, had a tongue, had an interpretation. They had all the instruments of a spiritual orchestra in that they came behind in no gift. But they had lost the concert pitch of the divine will, and were jarring along in discord and schism. Therefore Paul rebuked them sharply, and admonished them all to speak the same thing, that there be no divisions, but that all be perfected together in the same mind and judgment. For nothing but discord can grow out of the over-emphasis of individuality.

When a musician finds himself out of

tune, what is his remedy? Assume that he is right and all others are wrong? Should he press a little harder, play a little faster, continue a little longer in the effort to bring all others to adopt his particular pitch and time? Certainly not. He must call a halt, and bring his instrument up to the concert pitch. And, when he falls to playing again, he must begin not at the place where he fell out, but at the place whither the orchestra has come by that time. But in our association one with another it sometimes happens that, when we drop below the pitch and lose the key, we press a little harder upon our own will, and play as loud as possible with our individual judgment. And by this over-insistence on our personal preference and singular desire we become the cause of discord, pain, and strife. If, therefore, we would contribute to the symphony of Christian peace and joy, we must see to it that we are "like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind," "kindly affectioned one to another," "submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God," "all subject one to another and clothed with humility."

In the music-room of the soul there is a

harp of many strings. Each string has its particular tension and is designed to produce its own peculiar tone. If all the strings are kept at the right tension, they will strike musical harmonies into life's conduct and speech. Their vibrations must prove melodious or dissonant according as the several tones are true or false. This harp is the emotional nature, and the strings thereof are the various feelings and affections. From these all our activities take their immediate rise. Action is the impulse of feeling; therefore feeling dominates the world of action. Whatever may be the quality and tone of a feeling, its vibration into word or deed will be exactly the same.

We can readily explain our actions one towards another by the feelings that constrain us. You meet a friend upon the street, and speedily find yourself greeting him with unaffected cordiality and affection. A little further on you meet another individual whom you know just as well, and perhaps have known for a longer time. But your manner towards him is congealed with constraint. Your acknowledgment of his salutation is so frigid with formality that it borders upon snubbing contempt.

How do you explain this revolution of demeanor? You say simply, you feel very differently towards these persons. The one you appreciate, admire, and love; therefore your affection breaks out in hearty kindness. The other you suspect, dislike, or detest; and immediately your aversion clothes itself in a suited bearing. Upon leaving the first individual and meeting the second your whole emotional nature underwent a revulsion. A difference of feeling made all the difference in the manifested conduct. Whatever may be the character of our bearing and manner, it cannot be other than the same as the emotional nature at the same instant. Every change of deportment argues a change of emotion. If, therefore, the feelings are keyed to the notes of bitterness, covetousness, envy, malice, anger, pride, and their kind, we may expect nothing but discord when they are strummed into action. If, on the other hand, we witness the manifestation of kindness, humility, sympathy, patience, good will, and their like, we conclude that underlying them are feelings of the same nature. Our feelings flow in our actions, each after its kind.

Likewise the force or feebleness of an action will depend upon the strength or weakness of the energizing emotion. A log on the surface of the stream will drift at the same rate at which the depth of the waters is moving. So, if the unseen currents of passion are strong and turbulent, the energies borne on their tides will be correspondingly intense and violent. If their secret motion be constant and tranquil, their manifested activities will be equally regular and peaceful. And no change can take place in the one without a similar modification in the other.

A little meditation upon the correspondence between feelings and actions will help us determine our exact relations with the people with whom we mingle daily, and our attitude towards them. Analyze the nature of your bearing towards different people, and you will find a great diversity of characteristics. Answer yourself as to the why of this wide disparity and you will find your only answer in the caprice of feeling. Do we flatter ourselves that we are making no discord amid the rush of life's duties? Then we have only to examine the quality of our secret emotions, and con-

clude that our words and doings wear the same color and sound. The major chords of the heart will not make minor chords in conduct. If, on the other side, we discover the energies of life discordant, if our words are rasping with criticism, our looks lowering with resentment, our judgment biased with prejudice, and our actions unbalanced by partiality, it can only be because the heart is strung with feelings of the same quality. We can no more obtain good words and right acts out of wrong feelings than we could get a refreshing drink out of the stagnant waters of a malaria-breeding pool. We need, therefore, to give earnest heed that the strings of this emotional harp are kept at a tension accordant with the will of God.

When this orchestra of human emotions has lost the concert pitch, there are four things that may be done with the feelings.

First, they may be allowed the play of unrestrained freedom. In this mood their motion will be in the force of erratic wilfulness. When ungoverned feelings rush into the moulds of speech, and unbridled emotions issue in the torrent of turbulent utterance, they are like ships without rudders,

driven and tossed with a storm. As when the burning lava rushes down the mountain-side, carrying destruction, so are the lawless feelings that hurry forth bluntness, anger, envy, and resentment. And it is simply amazing on what shallow pretexts we venture to excuse our harshness of speech and boorishness of manner. Organic constitution, the laws of heredity, circumstances, conditions, environments, and arbitrary limitations are all made the scapegoats of our failure in this direction. To plead a nervous temperament is deemed sufficient to avoid blame for peevishness and irascibility. But when was there ever a special license granted to peculiarity of disposition? Where is there any warrant for supposing that any circumstances could secure immunity from obligation? The very complexity of a sensitive temperament is a capacity for close harmony. Such a delicate and perceptive organization is capable of great good if it is sincerely consecrated to God. Only when such a disposition becomes the instrument of carnal self-pleasing does it jar and spoil the music of life. And this is always the case when feelings flow unrestrained.

Second, we may disguise the real nature of our feelings. Humiliation may be crushing within, yet with a proud mien we may seek to cover our secret chagrin. The heart may cherish a most envious feeling against a successful rival while outwardly veneering it with the grace of conventional congratulations. We may profess to rejoice at another's good fortune and triumph, while envy and covetousness embitter all within. There is no feeling of vice in the soul that may not be disguised by affecting the semblance of an opposite virtue. Thus feelings may constantly parade in the borrowed robes of conventional politeness, and to a great degree hide their ill nature and deformity under forms of good breeding. But let us not forget that we are tempted to hide only those feelings which happen to fall under the ban of common censure; and secretly to foster that which we studiously seek to disguise is straight-out hypocrisy.

Third, we may curb and repress the contention of ill feeling that clamors for indulgence. As feeling after feeling comes to the gateways of our nature and seeks to go abroad, we may challenge each to stand and discover its character and identity. Upon

learning the real quality and tendency thereof we may in all honesty turn them back and deny them the liberty of action. We may bind them with enforced silence and inertia. At this point we ought carefully to distinguish between the repression of feeling and the dissembling thereof. Repression not only understands the evil of the feeling, but judges it evil, condemns it, and seeks to mortify it by opposing, while hypocrisy recognizes its noxious nature, but does not reprove and disappoint it. Repression is a virtue, whereas dissembling is a vice.

Fourth, the whole emotional nature may be revolutionized and become attuned to the good pleasure of God. Magnanimity may stifle envy, kindliness expunge rancor, liberality conquer avarice, forbearance displace anger, and love dethrone and banish every form of carnal affection. And, when the heart is restrung with those desires and moods that respond to God's Holy Spirit, the strings may vibrate with freedom; their sound will but augment and swell the symphony of grace.

We may predicate, then, that action which springs from bad feeling produces

discord, action which disguises real feeling makes the false chord, action checked by restrained feeling effects a broken chord, while action from revolutionized feeling makes concord. The first is like an active volcano, whose eruptions threaten disaster; and the lava of impulsive speech and capricious conduct sets on fire the whole wheel of nature. The second is like the volcano that does not emit fire or smoke at the crater, but undermines with deceptive force, and works disaster with sudden earthquake. The third is like a slumbering volcano, whose confined force may break forth in unsuspected moments. The last is like an extinct volcano, whose fires have died out. The lava that once burned its way with baleful effect has cooled and become the fertile soil of rich gardens where grow the fruits and flowers of a Spirit-filled life. Among these our best judgment must surely approve the last as the ideal and true.

Since the emotional nature plays so prominent a part in the round of daily doing, we should carefully weigh our responsibility with reference to this particular domain of the soul. If we are chargeable for our out-

ward conduct, it must follow that we are accountable for those unseen forces which shape and energize manifested life. We are liable to make short shrift of our impulsive conduct by saying, "I can't help it." We meet people with certain temperaments who have a way of exasperating us, and before we know it or can be put on guard we are swept away by some feeling, and find ourselves off the key and discordant.

Even with our best effort and honest endeavor we sometimes fail. Have we not sought to prepare ourselves for an interview or gathering that we knew would prove very trying? Imagination has conjured up the scene in advance, and we have deliberately planned a certain line of friendly conduct; we were resolved upon a cordiality of manner, sobriety of speech, and poise of bearing. But, alas, something went wrong. Some unanticipated provocation or slip unhinged our best resolves, and before we were aware our new feelings of kindness melted into air, and all the old emotions of antagonism rushed out to do battle in resentment. How often after such experiences have we had the uncomfortable feeling of being ground between the millstones

of self-accusation and self-vindication! At such times we are constantly beset with the temptation to fling away the sense of responsibility with the phrase, "I can't help it."

The moment that self is no longer before the bar of judgment, and we are free to estimate the deportment of other men, we recognize that responsibility attaches to feeling and action alike. We praise the men who hold their feelings in balance and control, and we censure those who allow their passion to master both judgment and will. But neither compliment nor censure has any place where there is no responsibility and power of control. Thus the very tribunal which we daily set up with regard to our neighbors and friends affirms the moral accountability of man for his feelings. When we open the Scriptures of God, we find the same obligation predicated. The commandment of the Lord is that we put away all anger, wrath, malice, bitterness, envy, and hatred, while we are to put on kindness, meekness, gentleness, compassion, and love. We are to cultivate the peerage of emotion, and utterly abandon the entire plebeiance of carnal feelings.

On the experimental side, we know the possibility of doing this. Who of us has not at some time in life nurtured a feeling from infancy to maturity? It was so frail at the beginning that with but little prayerful effort we might have torn it out of the heart. But the memory indulged it, and the imagination magnified it until it grew from a shadow to a substance. On the other hand, have we not by prayerful persistence succeeded in denying and starving a giant of ill will until it diminished and died a dwarf? Therefore the will should link arms with the conscience, and go often and freely into this music-chamber of the soul. The conscience whose ear is sensitive to harmony or discord should designate every feeling that has lost the concert pitch, and those that do not properly belong to the orchestra of Christian affections. And, as Pharaoh reinstated his butler while he hanged his baker, so the sovereign will should establish every feeling that is spiritual and tends towards Christlike activity, bring every affection that has lost the key-note back to the true pitch, and execute every carnal desire and impulse that tends to confirm the dominion of sin.

How may the music-room of the soul be kept in perfect harmony? How may the discordant feelings be made to accord with the will of God? The very first requisite is a belief in the possibility thereof. A balanced judgment will undertake only what it believes possible. Many a man has been obliged to abandon an undertaking that has proved impossible, but he did not think it so when he began the work. Faith in a possibility is the inspiration of vigorous effort. With this stimulant, men will undertake all practical and many seemingly impracticable schemes. But lacking this confidence they will not even enter upon that which might be easily done. In religious experience more than elsewhere belief in the ability to do and attain is the assurance of faith that presages success. We must believe, then, that every string of human feeling can be brought to a tension and kept where it will vibrate nothing but musical melody.

Then how? Immediately behind our emotions lie our thoughts. They are the musical scores which the feelings reproduce. If their notes are not right, there can be no music. Any error of composition

there will be sure to sound itself in a discord. Realizing the necessity of having purity of thought, St. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think on these things.*" Thoughts sustain the same relationship to feelings that feelings do to actions. The mind is the moulding-room of the emotional nature, and thoughts are the springs where feelings take their rise. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. If, therefore, we would feel right, we must think right. Whoever lays hold upon this secret of controlling the thoughts of the mind has gained the key of life's mastery.

Responsibility penetrates this inner chamber where the mystic web of thought is constantly weaving the pattern of character. Here, again, the Scriptures are emphatic and clear. They command us to be "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." We

must learn to subdue the erratic motions of thought and hold them in control. We must rein in the vagaries of imagination until discipline makes it our perfect servant. When the mind becomes subject to orderly thinking, then the will may command the thoughts and make them ministers of holy living and consecrated service. Therefore this revolution must take place in the antechamber to the throne-room, where thoughts are the nearest courtiers that wait in attendance upon the sovereign will.

Let me suppose here is a person towards whom I feel uncharitably. I do this because in my secret soul I entertain a wrong feeling towards him. But that feeling is dormant so long as he is absent from my thought. It is the thought that awakens the feeling, and the nature of the feeling indicates the nature of the thought. I must begin, then, with my thought concerning him. In the quiet moment of meditation I allow the imagination to bring him before me. I resolve that I will try to form an unprejudiced judgment of him. I begin to make allowances for things that had before escaped me. I reckon with his temperament, circumstances, advantages, and con-

ditions. I discover certain patent and more latent qualities of good within him. And so I come secretly to think better of him and wish him well. Added to this I learn to pray for his good and prosperity. Now all the time that my thought is undergoing this change a like revolution is taking place in my feelings. When next we meet, my manner will be cordial and my utterance with kindness. I have recovered the concert pitch, and may contribute my part to the symphony of Christian fellowship.

But, should this method prove too difficult and complicated, there is another and simple course along the same line; namely, "Set your mind on the things that are above." It is still in the region of the mind where the harmony must be effected. With the thought focused upon Christ there comes a light in which evil is ashamed to show itself. "In his bright beams which fall on us, fades every sinful thought." It is impossible to indulge sinful thinking so long as consciousness centres upon the Lord of glory. The psalmist said, "I have set the Lord always before me." That made him strong, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Heav-

enly-mindedness must expel carnality in every form. No emotion of resentment, anger, or revenge can find a place in the mind that is occupied with Christ. He himself sets in motion the current of holy thought and brotherly love; and, when these flow with power, thoughts and feelings of a sinful nature cannot make headway against the stream. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding garrisons the heart and mind," keeping the fountain-heads of life pure and sweet. And who cares for the criticism of the world or the slight of a servant, while enjoying the favor and smile of the King? Haman was not angered by Mordecai's refusal to do him homage until he left the presence of the king. And never can the storms of passion and sin sweep over our hearts and minds until they have wandered away from the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

"Great peace have they that love thy law;
They shall have no stumbling-block."

When an instrument of many strings is to be tuned, one central note is first brought to the correct tone. Then all the others are

regulated in harmony with that one. Among all the affections of the heart the central and primary one is love. If that be true to God, all the rest will be harmonized by it. Love will write all the melodies and chords of the divine will on the score of our secret thoughts. Love will carefully attune every feeling into unison with the purposes of grace. And, as we need to be daily strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; namely, in conscience, imagination, and will, even so must the music-chamber be thrown open to his visitation, that the orchestra of the affections may be established with grace. The love that is to pervade all our life and service is not the impulsive, uncertain, erratic feeling of affection that sometimes rises within us. It is the love which out of the deliberate choice of God is justified before reason, established in the will, and humbly accepts the responsibility of pleasing God. To possess this love, we must present ourselves before the throne of grace, and recollect and appreciate the love of God towards us, which is of a like nature. As we meditate upon his love, he sheds the same abroad in our hearts; and, as it flows over heart and mind, the

entire nature is brought into accord with him, and the orchestra is heard to discourse peace, joy, and good-will.

The musician comes into the drawing-room and seats himself at the piano. He strikes a few chords, and rises with disappointment. His musical ear is offended. His genius and skill were ready to pour themselves forth, but the instrument was useless for his purpose, being wild and out of tune. The children may strum its discordant strings to the annoyance of all within hearing, but no musician will waste two minutes in trying to produce a symphony upon it. And, if the harp of the soul is not attuned with love and grace, the Spirit of God will not spend his genius and power thereon. Selfish ambition may strike a thousand discords from it, but God's Spirit must pass on to some heart ready for his touch. Let us see to it that we are not only vessels meet for the Master's use, but also instruments always ready for the oratorio of glory to God and peace among men.

V.

THE HALL OF RECORDS, AND THE
LIBRARIAN.

There is one book in the Bible the burden of which, it might almost be said, is, Do not forget. Life is lost by forgetting. Times and seasons go over the head of the forgetful as they go over the head of the beasts in the field; God's providence is thrown away upon them, and they never win the heart of wisdom. . . . To have no memory for our own past is not only moral levity; it is ingratitude to a love which at every step in our journey has beset us behind and before and laid its gracious hand upon us. Faith in providence is the consecration of life; it binds us to reverence and responsibility in the present, and to a devout recollection of the past.—*Robertson Nicoll.*

V.

THE HALL OF RECORDS, AND THE LIBRARIAN.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee."—*Moses*.

"Remember Jesus Christ."—*St. Paul*.

IN our meditation upon that mysterious palace called "the inner man" we shall spend the last hour with the librarian in the hall of records. This is a kind of corridor in the soul, upon which all the doorways of all other compartments open. Every conscious moment of life finds these doors open, and through them the faculties of the mind are continually passing in and out. At all times it is a very busy place.

This chamber is a kind of storeroom where all the treasures of life are garnered. Here are chronologers continually recording the facts and associations connected with our personal history, even while it is in the making. The artist comes here, and has his portfolios in which he files away his sketches and paintings. Some of them are

drawings illustrating the immediate foreground of passing history, while others are visions only in the far-off perspective of prophecy. The judge searches this hall of records for the evidences of our moral conduct, and upon the testimony here recorded he pronounces our conviction or vindication. The musicians gather here to select the scores composed in other days, from which they awaken again the emotions of pain or pleasure. The sovereign visits this chamber to read the archives that tell the history of his dynasty; and the reading will make him either rejoice at his increased power, or lament over his enfeebled incompetency. All the faculties go to and fro, some storing away newly gained accessions, some only referring to the abundance already accumulated.

The name of this wonderful chamber is memory. It is the great reference library of the soul, equipped with secretaries who carefully register, locate, and catalogue everything committed to their trust. Memory has the function of treasuring up all the scenes, acts, words, and sounds of daily life. In after days consciousness may come here and recollect the details of personal

history. Memory will turn over the panorama of its scenes and re-utter every word with its exact quality and inflection of tone. It is stenographer, phonographer, and photographer all in one.

This faculty is most closely allied with all the practical activities of daily life. Were it not for the conserving power of memory, the work wrought by the other faculties would unravel as quickly as woven; their treasure would be lost as soon as gained. If the function of memory were to cease entirely, the mind would become intellectually bankrupt and the whole man fall into a wreck as a sequence.

Not only does memory serve us by co-operating with the mind when it is engaged in the effort to recollect the past, but it has become so habitually alert that in a thousand instances it brings forth the requisite knowledge before we elect to call for it. How many things we have learned to do mechanically! The knowledge which we gained by studious effort and the activity acquired by diligent practice are easy to us now, just because memory has conserved what we have gained.

In the routine of daily doing we enact

many things that seem to involve no reflection of the mind or volition of the will. Consciousness may centre upon something altogether different. Then how do we perform these mechanical acts, which one time required the co-operation of thought and will? Simply because memory has learned the science of co-operating with the reflective and volitional faculties, until in these spontaneous activities it seems able to use a part of their power without their knowing it. How much effort of thought or will do we employ in rising, dressing, eating, walking? Yet these things were learned only through the severity of much practice, but now we have become disciplined to a mechanical performance of them. What we call habit is the automatic working of memory, utilizing some of the stores that have been committed to it.

If the nervous system of the body were to fall into a complete paralysis, the entire man would sink into decay and death. Not a muscle would move. The lungs would forget to heave. The heart would cease to contract and expand. The eye would no longer see, nor would the ear hear. Sensation and activity would be

dead. It is the nervous system that converts mental into physical force, and binds the several powers of mind and body into one. So, if we were to blot out the memory, the automatic sequences which have established themselves in the mechanical activities of habit would become disconnected, and we should be unable to go through the ordinary routine of daily life. Humanity would stand like a mass of idiots, lost and helpless amid the handiwork of its own genius. Memory is the carrying power of the soul. Without it the mind would be like a sieve, letting all that ever came into it leak out.

Memory is, moreover, the dreamland of the soul. As the mind turns over the pages of our yesterdays, the functions of our physical faculties become suspended. Thought is transported to the far away, and the eye no longer holds in view the scenes about us, while the ear allows all conversation to drift by unnoticed. "Absent-minded," is the comment of those who chance to catch us in this state. That word exactly describes it. The mind has taken wings and flown away from the prosaic present. Somewhere in this enchanted

chamber it has lighted upon a distant scene.

There are ten thousand avenues in memory by which consciousness may journey back among the scenes long since passed away. The prisoner who retires into this mystic room finds himself loosed from his fetters; the walls recede, and he goes forth to rove awhile in the liberty of other days. The soldier forgets the roar and shock of battle, and by a hidden path visits his home. He has no official leave of absence, yet without violating duty he mingles with loved ones far away from the scenes of strife. The exiled explorer finds memory a rapid transit whereby he may run away from his trials, dangers, and hardships, and visit the fireside and family which he left miles and months behind him. Even from the dull routine of the trivial round of prosaic duty, memory offers many excursions into the fairy-land of exceptional days with their rare experiences.

We may sigh with a quasi-disappointment when consciousness lands us again among the dull and tedious surroundings of actual existence, just as we sometimes sigh and lament when the summer holiday is

spent and we must needs return to the task of toil. Nevertheless, we have drawn inspiration from this relaxation, and are the better able to pursue the race on the common level. This ability to leap miles in an instant and years in a moment by the aid of memory is a great alleviative amid the grind and friction of tiresome obligation. Happy is the man whose memory abounds with visions of purity and sounds of peace. He will find in this chamber the compensations that will offset much of the weariness of life.

But the treasures of this storeroom are not always of such a nature that recollection will invariably convey pleasure and joy. Are there not departments here which we carefully guard under the lock and key of unbroken silence? Some of memory's imagery we hang up to public view, and invite the inspection of our friends. But other parts of it we hide away in the dark recesses, and never permit our most intimate relatives to look thereon. We enter those secluded corners alone, and would suffer the confusion of shame, did mortal being know what we so jealously conceal there. These recondite memories may

cause us the pleasure of sinful excitement, or sting us with the pain of an outraged conscience; but still they are there. We would not have some of these hidden records brought to the light for worlds. Their exposure would be our utter undoing. Suppose the visions which imagination has stored away here were exposed to public view; suppose the phonographs were to give out the open utterances and secret whispers of speeches that we trust are buried away from men; suppose every compartment of memory were thrown open to every one's view, should we not be completely confounded?

While memory, then, has its pleasure-garden where the fragrance, pageant, and music of other days may be revived with joy, it has also its chamber of horrors, where closets have their skeletons that we fear to look upon, and where voices thunder from deep caverns, and fill us with dread while we listen. There are avenues here that we deliberately avoid. We are sometimes dragged thither against our will, as a guilty victim is thrust into a torture chamber designed to wring from him a coerced confession.

What can the grace of God effect in this wonderful chamber of the soul? If the past is irrevocable, can any change take place in the faculty whose sole function is to perpetuate the irreversible history of our yesterdays? If memory is beyond the touch of some renovating power, we may settle it that there can never be the experience of peace in the soul. If the pleasures of past sin survive in the memory, though they be as secret as the buried treasure in Achan's tent, there cannot be victory in the outward life. If the ghosts of our clandestine evil cannot be buried, but must ever haunt us by unwelcome intrusion, then farewell every hope of unbroken joy. If transgressions are to live ever in this chamber, and never to be transfigured by some transforming power, we can never become reconciled to living with it. Therefore, if the grace of God has within its gift that which brings peace, rest, and joy to the heart, it must have also some power whereby it can work some miraculous change in the soul's record-hall.

In the moral as in the physical constitution of man there are antidotes that neutralize and counteract the deadly working of

sin, and this specific must find its way into memory. The most tremendous event of the soul's history takes place when the Son of God is admitted to the life and begins the work of his salvation. When faith has discerned him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, when conscience has approved his claim and urged his admission, when the will has surrendered to and welcomed his sovereignty, the memory must make record of this vital circumstance. Imagination, conscience, and will together come into this chamber which they have filled with their doings; and now they erect the cross of Christ, with its promise of the forgiveness of sin.

No sooner is this done than a new light floods this hall as it did all the other chambers of the soul. That light is the grace of God, and has a wondrous transfiguring power. Under its light all the sins of the past seem to undergo a change. Their accusing fingers no longer point out our guilt; their voices cease in their cry of condemnation; their garments turn color from scarlet to white. The cross has become the sounding-board echoing through

the memory God's promise, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more against them." And, as this article of the new covenant is heard throughout the length and breadth of the memory, our sins, all our sins of whatever nature and kind, are shot through with the light of his pardoning grace. They are transfigured by redeeming love, and every one of them is become the background upon which there shines a vision of the glorious Redeemer who forgiveth all our iniquities. The adversary of our souls massed them into a thick cloud of condemnation, and made them to thunder with accusation and woe. The Saviour blotted out this thick cloud, and stilled the storm with his "Peace, be still." To the redeemed soul memory is no more a crypt of iniquity and a vault of terror, but a gallery where the smiling face of our Redeemer is manifolded as many times as there are sins in our lives.

This birthday of Christ in the soul is a red-letter day for the memory. Is there such a day on the calendar of your history? If not, then, however deep you may seek to bury your transgressions in the graveyard of forgetfulness, "be sure your sin

will find you out." But, if Christ be in you, hesitate not to fling open every secret closet of your yesterdays; his grace will make the whole to radiate with glory.

Memory is frequently found to be a bond of fidelity. The youth far away from home and amid strangers feels the sudden shock of temptation. But the recollection of a loved one, and the memory of a faithful admonition, instantly create the iron of resistance, and he passes through the trial triumphantly. The pilgrim wearied with his journey and almost fainting with fatigue remembers the waiting hearts at the fireside, and finds therein a stimulant for renewed effort. The discouraged slave of toil is depressed and haunted with the temptation to find rest in a suicide's grave; but the memory of dependent lives acts like a tonic, and nerves the soul with fresh resolution. The memory of a friend will surround us with a holy atmosphere; make us strong to spurn all that is mean, weak, and sinful; and gird us with strength to pursue the ideals of perfect and holy living. Have we not here some psychologic law that offers to put the key of righteous living into our hand? If the memory of the

good, though they be but faulty representatives of virtue, serves to make us strong and resolute to be like them, will not the memory of Jesus Christ work with like potency?

The apostle Paul among many admonitions to the youthful Timothy bids him "remember Jesus Christ." In the consciousness of Paul, Christ was ever present. Whatever might be the circumstance, duty, or trial, he always recollected Jesus Christ; and there was no event in his life from which the Lord was divorced by forgetfulness. Therefore he not only saw the Christ of God transfigured against the guilt of his past sin, but every new circumstance and event of history became associated with Christ. He was crowding his memory with more and better visions of the Christ. Paul's world had been blotted out by the blinding vision of a persecuted Son of God. Then the first vision of his soul was that same Son as a Saviour. Henceforth Christ was to him the greatest of all realities, and interwoven with everything in his life. He remembered him as creator amid creation, controller amid all changing providences, redeemer against the background

of sin, a priest helping in hours of temptation. His steadfast thought of the Lord was the secret of his life and service; therefore he urges, "Remember Jesus Christ."

In one of the royal galleries of Russia there is the portrait of a princess reduplicated hundreds of times. She is represented amid the scenes of court life, the family circle, the chase, at games, and in all the rounds of gayety and duty that might occupy the time of one born to royalty. But it is always the same face. The Czar was so in love with this princess that he had her likeness painted into all the circumstances that environed him. So ought we to associate Jesus Christ with every circumstance of daily experience. Whatever change may take place from hour to hour, he should mingle with every detail. This is to remember Jesus Christ. And when this exercise is persisted in, though it be with effort at the first, it will soon become both easy and habitual.

"Practising the presence of God" was a very simple rule that shaped the character and conduct of some men eminent for piety. This single canon was sufficient to

make them steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For who can sin in the conscious presence of God? So long as the mind is stayed upon him the soul is kept in perfect peace. Temptations lose their fascination and power when Christ is present to the mind. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life lose their grip when the light of his presence shines upon them. Associate the Lord with everything, and you have safe conduct through life. Every vice will be unmasked and every virtue appear at its real value. With Christ present in our recollection we need never be in doubt concerning duty and privilege. We walk in the light as he is in the light, and our fellowship is with the Father and his Son.

Before sin and Satan can gain any real vantage they must secure an absence of Christ from the mind. They must put him in eclipse, and this they do through forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is the atmosphere of sin. In God's dealings with Israel he rang the changes upon the importance of remembering and the dangers of forgetting. Forgetfulness lets God slip out of the scene,

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looses the carnal life, and allows it to dominate without regard to God.

There is a practical atheism that is no less sinful than theoretic atheism. To live and do and talk without any regard to God is the practical form of atheism. Though it does not deny him existence, it does deny him a place in our thoughts, affections, and deeds. Forgetfulness secures just this condition; and therefore it is a sin, yea, a great sin opening the way for many other sins. In its last analysis, then, remembering Christ is the essence of worship, whereas forgetting him is the substance of practical atheism.

When the memory has been cleansed through the forgiveness of God, it needs to be strengthened and stimulated for his indwelling and service.

But how is this to be secured? Some people complain that they have poor memories. They find it difficult to retain certain forms of knowledge.

After making all allowances for differences that may rise out of hereditary bias and subsequent training it still remains true that all persons remember some things, and remember them very vividly.

Memory depends upon impressions, and impressions are obtained in two ways.

First, there is the discipline of effort. In this way we memorized the multiplication table and the rules of grammar, repeating them again and again until they became fixed.

Second, some things we remembered after once hearing, because they deeply interested us.

Now, if Christ becomes the one great focus point of our interest, to remember him will be very simple. If this be lacking, we must master the difficulty by drill. Memory is simply familiarity, and familiarity can be secured by persistent discipline. It implies work, toil, effort; but these all in turn form habit, and habit is the thing made easy.

In the Christian life we have several important aids to memory. The Scriptures are a revelation to us of the life and purpose of Jesus Christ, and by studying them we may acquire familiarity with all that he was, is, and yet will be. They reveal Christ to us, beget and develop Christ in us, and finally transfigure Christ through us. And, as we meditate upon the word of

God and assimilate it, the Holy Spirit impresses truth upon our memory; and, when the crises of life arrive, he brings to our remembrance sufficient to carry us triumphantly through. Just as with our life in the body effort makes its deposit in the memory until it works mechanically, so in the spiritual life memory treasures all conscientious effort at doing the will of God, and forms those spiritual habits that ultimately make the spiritual life spontaneous and automatic.

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